1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Another possible cause might be the epidemics of some sort of genito-urinary disease which occasionally breaks out. The Lepchas call this disease *tanji*, which is the term used by mission-trained dispensers for gonorrhœa; although some of the symptoms, notably great pain in micturition, a discharge of pus, and occasionally orchitis, are similar, it seems to me more than doubtful if the diagnosis is correct. For one thing the disease comes in epidemics, and seems to attack people indiscriminately, old people and infants as well as adults; on one occasion it is said that the animals also suffered. Again trustworthy people have told me that though they or their spouse had the disease, and though they continued marital copulation, the other spouse was not affected. The discharge lasts for about three weeks, and then clears up automatically, without, as far as is known, leaving any after-effects, nor necessarily recurring. The final argument against its being gonorrhœa is that there was not a single blind baby in the neighbourhood. Whatever the disease may be, it does not inevitably cause sterility for some of the parents of the larger and still growing families had suffered from it. It is possible however that it is a complicating cause. Unlike their neighbours the Nepali, the Lepchas of Zongu do not suffer much from mumps.

Since their principal food is grain in one form or another it seems to me that the question of vitamin-E deficiency can be excluded. I think it is worth considering the suggestion that the sterility and very low fertility are due to genetic factors. The Lepchas are a 'pure' race within the meaning of the act, for at any rate in Zongu intermarriage is excessively rare; in Lingthem besides the two supposed bastards there was only one other person not of pure Lepcha blood, and that is Mrs. Tinkep who is three-quarters Sikkimese. Despite their stringent exogamic laws the Lepchas are a relatively inbred community, and if, as seems possible, fertility is genetically determined, it may be that the low reproduction rate of the Lepchas is a genetic characteristic.

Compared with any of the neighbouring tribes the fertility of those Lepchas who have children is extremely low. Of the thirty-seven women in Zongu who have children still living, only one has produced seven and two six; the average is just over two per fertile woman. Infantile mortality is naturally high, but not, according to the figures I could get, excessively high; most mothers of families seem to have lost one child, but only in three cases have all or most of the children died young. It is possible however that